

thinks of me, I wouldn't dare to guess, and even if I hadn't called her Lady Cucumber, I expect— Oh Lordy! here she comes now!"

**H**E'D heard the rustle of stiff silk and the heavy step on the hardwood floor as soon as I had, and he'd grabbed his bag and hat before you could think twice. But at that he was too late; for there, loomin' up solid and massive between the draperies, is a fat, purple-faced old party with a hard, cold look in her eyes, gazin' at us stern and disapprovin'. Under one arm she's huggin' a fat, wheezy, little old pug dog, and as she reaches for her lorgnette she drops him on the floor. Pa Jackson stands there starrin' at her with his mouth half open, like he'd been hypnotized.

"Ugh!" says she, takin' a squint at him. "That odious person again!"

"Yes'm," says he, bowin' awkward.

"Humph!" she snorts; and then, turnin' to me, she snaps out, "Who are you, pray?"

"Guilty," says I. "I mean I'm just Torchey. Honest, Lady, I don't belong to the fam'ly. I'm waitin' to leave a christenin' present for the kid."

"Kid?" she gasps. "Another odious person?"

"Yep," says I, "number two."

"Humph!" she snorts again, and with that she salls between us towards the conservatory, the fat pug wheezin' along behind.

Where the Boston bull terrier had been concealed all this time I expect I'll never know; but he must have been on the scent and layin' for puggy, for all of a sudden he scoots through on the jump, lands on the pug with all four feet and his mouth open, and for the next few seconds the lib'ry was an excitin' place. There was growls from the terrier, and howls and ki-yi's and toenail scratchin' by the pug, with Lady Collamer squealin' for help and hoppin' round wrangin' her hands.

Being right on the spot, it was up to me and Pa Jackson; and I must say that the calm way the old gent dove in and grabbed the terrier by the neck was all to the scientific. Between my pullin' away at the pug, and Pa Jackson's pryin' open the terrier's teeth with his fingers, the heroic rescue was made in record time.

Having his fun spoiled in that fashion made the Boston bull some ugly, and he starts in to chew up the old sport's wrist. But Pa Jackson was a dog tamer from up the creek. He proceeds to shake off the pup, and as he drops him he executes as neat a kick as if he was a star punter on some college eleven. And by the time the yelps had died out as the terrier gets nearer the attic, and the butler and three maids has been sent to lock him up, and the pug has been restored to the protectin' arms of Lady Collamer, the old girl was ready to extend her vote of thanks. There's no denyin', too, but that she did it generous and handsome.

"And so," she says, after that's off her mind, "you are the father of Evelyn's husband, are you?"

"Yes, Lady Cu-Cull—" begins Pa Jackson, tryin' to make a society bow and get the name straight at the same time.

"Collamer," says she, helpin' him out. "And for Heaven's sake stop bobbin' your head that way! Sit down too, both of you."

Well, we sat. Pa Jackson only venturin' to squat on the edge of his chair, and still holdin' his hat.

"Now tell me, Mr. Jackson," says she, "why you are moonin' about the house with that traveling bag? You were not thinking of leaving before the christening ceremony, were you?"

"Why—er—ye-e-es," says Pa Jackson.

"What?" she explodes, glarin' at him.

"No, not—not at all," says he. "I was—er—that is—"

"Ah, back up!" says I, breakin' in. "You know you w'n't beatin' it; you told me so."

"Ah—ha!" says she. "And for what reason, I should I... to know?"



For a Few Seconds the Lib'ry Was an Excitin' Place.

Pa Jackson glances at me reproachful and makes a stagger at explainin'. "Why," he goes on, "I thought I might as well clear out now. I only came on for a short stop, you know, and—well, the fact is, I ought to be getting back to Manistee."

"Humph!" says Lady Collamer. "I don't believe a word of it! Boy, do you know anything more?"

"Sure!" says I. "It was a case of cold feet."

"Cold feet?" says she. "Meaning what, now?"

"Why, you had him scared stiff, that's all," says I, "and, as long as you've put me on the stand, I might as well say that it don't strike me as a square deal. He's the youngster's grandfather, ain't he? And it seems he ought to cut some figure at the christenin'."

"Quite right," says the old lady. "So he shall. I mean to attend to that myself. First of all, though, we must get better acquainted. Tell me about your son."

**A**BOUT Tommy?" says Pa Jackson.

"Certainly," says Lady Collamer. "To be sure, he's an American; but I like him very much. He seems to be a manly, capable young fellow."

"Tommy always was a good boy," says Pa Jackson, bruskin' his eyes with the back of his hand.

"Was he born out there in—in that unheard-of place where you live?" says Lady Collamer.

"Tommy?" says Pa Jackson. "Why no, Tommy was born right in New York. You know, I was in business here myself once; same line too, steamship agent. We were doing well, and I was planning some day to have a nice home,—maybe not quite so fine as this, but almost, for we were making money fast in those days,—when something happened that ended it all."

"Yes?" says Lady Collamer. "Go on."

"It's a matter I ain't talked much about for a good many years," says Pa Jackson. "But I had a partner, a young Englishman, bright and smart and good natured. I thought as much of him as if he'd been a brother. It was making money so fast that spoiled him. He wanted to spend his share as it came in,—fine clothes, fast horses, wine, and all the rest. He got in with a bad lot. I didn't know how bad they were,

though, until late one night when he staggered into my front door with a bullet in his shoulder. That wasn't the worst, either. He said he'd killed a man. There had been a row in a gambling place. He'd been shot, and he'd shot back. And before morning he told me the rest. He'd lost a lot of money, and a good deal of it was mine. Well, what could I do? He was like a brother to me, mind you. I kept him under cover, the wife and I nursed him until he was well enough to travel, and then I put him aboard a steamer for England. And, after all, as it turned out, the other fellow got well too. But our business had gone to smash. I took what was left, and with little Tommy and his mother we went West. I've been there ever since, working and scraping to give Tommy the chance I had once. Tommy's had it, and he's made good too. So I'm satisfied."

Say, that was some of a yarn to dig up from a quiet little old chap like Pa Jackson! I'd been followin' it so close too, that I hadn't noticed how Lady Collamer was takin' it until just at the finish I glanced over to see her with her hands grippin' the chair arms and a dif'rent look in her eyes.

"This young Englishman's name," says she, "was it Kendall?"

"Why, yes," says he. "Bryce Kendall. You didn't happen to know him, did you?"

"I did," says she. "That was my son's name before he came into the title and became Lord Collamer. And if you are the Thomas Jackson named in his will, there is still held in trust for you the estate of Chipping Sodbury in Devonshire."

"Well, well!" says Pa Jackson. "Left me a place over there, did he?"

"The finest in the county," says Lady Collamer. "I trust you will go back with me and occupy it. It adjoins mine, and I'm sure I should like you for a neighbor."

"Why, thank you," says Pa Jackson, "that's mighty nice of you to say, and I guess you and I'd get along as neighbors first rate, after all. But Manistee's more my style. In fact, the train I was thinking of taking leaves in about—"

"Thomas Jackson," says Lady Collamer, "put—down—that—bag! I'm going to have a talk with Evelyn about you and— Why, here she is now!"

**W**ELL, say, as it was past my lunch hour, and as I wa'n't strictly in this fam'ly love feast, I hauls over the package to Mrs. Kent-Jackson and slides out to where the fat butler was waitin' to shoo me through the door. And at two-fifteen I presents Mrs. Robert with the receipt I'd made the jewlry clerk give me.

"Here, Torchey," he sings out, "what does this mean?"

"Price ticket on the christenin' present," says I. "And here's the change. Ain't it right?"

"Right!" he bows. "Why, you scarlet topped young imp, you've made me send a silver shaving mug to a three-months-old baby!"

"Gee!" says I. "So that shelf was for soap, was it? Well, maybe he'll grow to it, seein' he's a boy."

Which may disguise, but don't work any review on the fact that I'm in bad with Mr. Robert, just the same. And it lasts until he blows in from luncheon next day. Instead of his slammin' the gate and rushin' past my desk, though, I looks up to find him standin' there grinnin' at me amiable.

"I've been having a talk with Kent-Jackson, Torchey," says he.

"Uh-huh?" says I. "Sore about the shavin' mug, was he?"

"Hardly," says Mr. Robert. "He thinks you're a wonder-something about the way you smoothed matters out between his old dad, whom he thinks a heap of, and his wife's aunt. Now just how did you manage it?"

"Me?" says I. "Why, it was the old gent himself, tellin' the story of his life without waitin' for the music cue. All I did was mix in a little at the start. Honest, it was Pa Jackson got the good lunch."

## YOUNG MR. THUNDERBOLT



**W**E are dependably informed by philosophers, pessimists, and loafers—Confucius, Diogenes, Plato, and all their well-meaning but badly barbered disciples—that the Tower of Fame is a skyscraper, ninety-eight stories high, seventeen times taller than the Washington Monument, and unequipped with elevators for the use of the young. We are also told that ascent of the Tower in any circumstances is slow, tedious, and torturing, and that the climb is made on the outside walls, which are slippery as a ballroom floor or a reform pledge dated January 1. Finally, according to the epigrams and syllogisms handed out through the crawling centuries, few get to the top. If, by suffering much and working over the time allowed by the bricklayers' union, you get halfway up, you're lucky; and, whether you go halfway or travel all the way, you are gray headed, dyspepsia ridden, and artery hardened by the time you arrive, and nobody gets any good out of it except your tombstone and descendants.

Such a sad state of affairs, we are instructed, arises from the fact that an unkind Fate is always hanging

around ready to drop an Egyptian pyramid on the climber's face, or to crack him over the head with a well-developed wagon tongue, or to snip off his clinging fingers with the shears of adverse circumstance. Just to make their sad lesson sadder, the aforementioned philandering philosophers insist that youth is lunatic and sorely vexed.

But all these things, depressingly wise as they sound, are untrue, grossly misleading, mythical, and mirage. They have been shot to pieces, put out of business, sent to the scrapheap, and shrouded in the crimson covers of a ten-cent jokebook.

And the work of destruction has been done by young Mr. Thunderbolt—meaning Luke Lea, the newly elected United States Senator from Tennessee. At the early age of thirty-one, he sits on top of the Fame Tower, hangs his derby on a glittering minaret, and uses the shimmering end of a shining spire to clean his pipe. The raveled clouds wrap about his ample brow the cooling wreaths of their silver linings, the evening star leads the mighty concert of the heavens to make music for his ears. And he does not have to burn the midnight oil; for the congregated constellations hold their glamour back of his left shoulder so that the light will be at such an angle as not to hurt his eyes when he reads. From this it is evident that what he has done to the old boys' theories about the Tower is more than enough, in excess of a sufficiency.

BY JAMES HAY, JR.

As soon as Luke got out of college eight years ago, he let out a whoop, turned the dogs loose and sicked 'em on all the unkind Fates and adverse circumstances that happened to be loafing in the yard. Having thus obtained a clear field, he took a running start, landed smack on one of the bastions of the tall Tower, passed the time of day with Dame Fortune, and proceeded to skip merrily from rampart to rampart and parapet to parapet. He did not stop to ask about the elevator. He would not have needed it if one had existed. He displayed all the agility of a chimpanzee and all the grace of a flying squirrel.

Before he left college, one of his professors had remarked to him, "There's always room at the top, Luke."

"Me for the top?" replied Luke. "I don't like to be crowded."

The story of his flight to the top is as good as anything that writers of fairy tales have ever put forth. It involved battling with a political régime that had ruled Tennessee since the Civil War. It required the overthrow of fortifications thrown up by the brains and resources of politicians and statesmen grown white-headed in the service. It compelled conflict with the crowned kings of the State's ballots. It forced him to become a thunderbolt trimmed up with white lightning.

In the course of his short career he made Malcolm R.

*Continued on page 18*